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Jenny Saville

SAVILLE



Synopsis

At thirty-two, Jenny Saville has had a career most artists twice her age would envy. In 1992, the year she completed her studies at Glasgow School of Art, her graduation exhibition sold out. Most notably, one painting was bought by Charles Saatchi and, since then, her international reputation has grown at a rapid and steady pace. Jenny Saville is described as a "New Old Master" for the technical proficiency of her oversize nudes that have earned her comparisons to Rubens and Lucian Freud and universal praise from critics and art historians alike. For the conceptual underpinnings of her work, she has been hailed as one of the most interesting artists of the last decade. Her work has been shown alongside that of Damien Hirst and the other Young British Artists in the acclaimed and seminal survey of new British art *Sensation* at the Royal Academy (London, 1997) and the Brooklyn Museum of Art (New York, 2000). This is the only monograph devoted to the critically acclaimed young artist and features all of Jenny Saville's paintings to date-including many previously unpublished. This volume is being published in association with the Gagosian Gallery in London. The power of her brilliant and relentless embodiment of our worst anxieties about our own corporeality and gender is what distinguishes Saville from other paint-obsessed representers of the naked human body. To my eye, no other artist in recent memory has combined empathy and distance with such visual and emotional impact. -Linda Nochlin, Art in America, March 2000

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. British painter Saville has had a charmed career. As a student at the Glasgow

School of Art, she sold out her graduation exhibit. (One of the paintings was bought by no less than Charles Saatchi.) At 27, she was included in the acclaimed (and, in New York City, notorious) *Sensation* show. And now, at 35, she is widely chatted about as one of Britain's most important young artists. One look at this gorgeous monograph, Saville's first, proves that all this success is well earned. Arranged chronologically, with paintings from 1992 to 2005, the volume reveals that though Saville's subject matter has hardly changed, her use of paint has evolved by leaps and bounds. Like Lucian Freud, Saville's fascinated with the body and the pigmentation of flesh, but her visions of it are both darker and brighter than his. Many of her paintings feature bodies that have been manipulated or damaged—“by gender-changing plastic surgery, say, or by burns”—but her rendering of these states is brilliantly colored. And in the most recent paintings (“*Stare*,” “*Passage*,” “*Torso 2*”) the subject is set against a background of warm, Mediterranean blue that heightens both the images' beauty and their capacity to unnerve. Schama's interview with Saville—the best of the texts included here—provides insight into the artist's methods and her ambition to keep improving technically (“I can barely look at the earlier paintings I made”), while the many photographs of her studio, drafts and source material show the ordinary-looking origins of her work, and the many close-shots record her expressionist use of paint. While no book can convey the power of Saville's oversize canvases, this well-composed volume provides an illuminating survey of her work. (Nov.)

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Simon Schama is the art critic for the *New Yorker* as well as a world-renowned scholar. Schama has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, and Harvard and is now Professor of History at Columbia University where specializes in European cultural and environmental history and art history. Between 1999 and 2002 he wrote, presented, and filmed the fifteen-part *A History of Britain* for BBC Television. He is currently at work on a book about the Anglo-American relationship and an eight part television series for the BBC, *The Power of Art*.

No one paints flesh like Jenny Saville. No one. The insights shared about the painting process helped me resolve an issue I was having with a portrait. Saville uses mirrors. Ah. As soon as I turned the piece toward a mirror, the problem revealed itself and I was able to correct it. Brilliant insight and certainly not the only one. I found this book to be of importance, not only as a documentation of her gorgeous paint handling, but also as an important insight into her process. The pieces are about Saville. There have been efforts to make them 'about' a larger theme, but at the end of the day, the work is Saville's and so is the theme. Wonderful book. Great reference.

Great introduction to Saville's work. I especially love the high quality close ups of her paintings, but I do have an issue with how much of the pages are set out (lots of white space and small picture). But on the whole - great addition to my growing collection of art books. The included essays are also very easy to read and insightful.

Fine condition, plates superb, lots of information on how Saville works. It shows her earlier work. Too bad I didn't have to money for a later one, but I'll wait a few years, when her oeuvre is larger. She's a genius and my hero.

All other considerations aside, Jenny Saville can paint, and this book proves it, close up and pouring across the pages. Truly a "painter's painter," Saville uses heightened color discovered, apparently, through manipulating photographs in Photoshop, then painting the results. However she arrives at it, her paint is gorgeous, the colors luscious and compelling. Without a doubt Saville blows away the competition in contemporary figurative realism. For my money, Lucien Freud has nothing on this young female painter. On the other hand, anyone thinking of buying the book should realize that many of the figures are grotesque, raw, actually painful to look at. Art historian Linda Nochlin calls them "hugely disturbing," and I have to agree. It is, in fact, the virtuosity of the paint that delivers such a visceral gut punch when applied to the subject matter, which ranges from obesity plus plastic surgery to men with large [...] plus male genitalia, all displayed in gargantuan proportions right in your face. The articles accompanying this monograph are excellent as well -- and not nearly disturbing as the images.

the Colors are not as vibrant or saturated as her paintings.

"The greatest living realist painter" is how Robert Hughes described Lucian Freud. Move over Lucian. I for one am stunned at the virtuosity of Saville. I agree with the first reviewer that I would have loved to have a tomb about 300+ pages of just artwork. I guess we will just have to wait. But what we do have here is equally worth the price. I found the studio photos and reference photos very enlightening. You can see where her ideas have come from and literally see the photos she is working from. From an artist's point of view, this is wonderful. The reproductions that are in the book are very good. I really, really wish we could have seen more of her drawings as I think these reveal the real strength of her work. I find the shock value of some of the subjects a little old, but have no

problem because the pure application of paint and line is so very beautiful. Would we even be writing about Jenny Saville if she was painting flowers or landscapes? Irregardless, she is who she is, and I love it. A must see is the painting of the cow carcass. Stroke for stroke, this is one of the best paintings every done.

I pre-ordered this book and when it arrived, I was not disappointed. I pored over it for a few days before bringing it to the studio to show the artists who work in my studio. They were equally excited by this collection, but then what do we know? We just make our total livings at making artwork. It is our day job!Sorry that I can't look into my crystal ball to see what she'll be like at age 80 but right now, she is breathing real life and power into contemporary realism. This book shows ample reason why Saville is celebrated and her detractors are virtual unknowns.The best always rise to the top...always.

Jenny Saville's gripping art is presented beautifully in this lavish full-color hardcover. Her work, evocative of Lucien Freud's but somehow more slick -- her brush technique is very clean -- is at once lovely and disturbing. This is a book any admirer of fine contemporary (or, for that matter, any era) representational art should own. Saville is still remarkably young; one can only imagine how far her talent will guide her.

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